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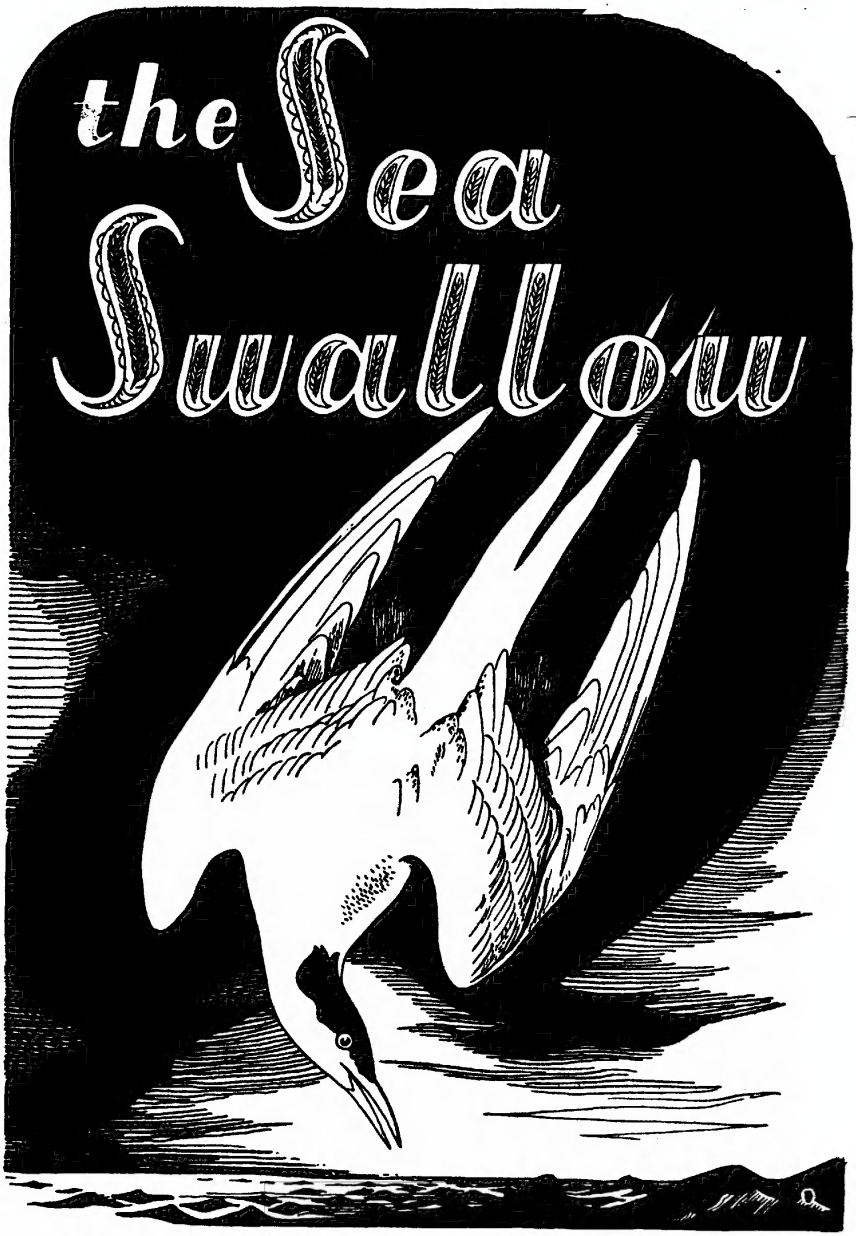

BEING THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ROYAL NAVAL BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

Published December, 1957

ROYAL NAVAL BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

(Affiliated to the British Trust for Ornithology)

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1957

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SILVER GULL
(Larus novaehollandiae)
(Published by courtesy of the West Australian Newspapers Ltd.)
High speed panchromatic film, 40in. telephoto lens, 1,000th sec. at f11.

FOREWORD

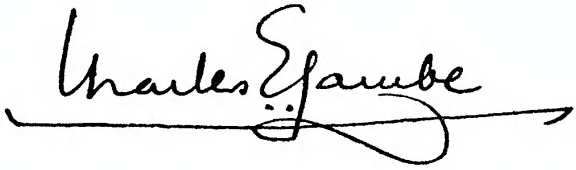
I am both proud and sad to step into the gap left by the death of your former President. Sad for obvious reasons ; proud because of the steady growth of the R.N.B.W.S. and of the vast fields which still remain as a challenge to our activities.

To my mind the Society is of real value in two separate ways. The first is, obviously, to ornithology. Interest in ocean birds in the R.N. and the M.N. is still largely untapped. Every new member is a gain to ornithology particularly if his work is careful and is referred to our consultant ornithologists. Such references increase the field of human knowledge and, in return, we too benefit from the consultant's advice and help. Let us have more members and more contacts with the ornithologists.

Secondly the Society does much and can do more to help the Navy. Our worst enemies in the Service today are often boredom and frustration. An active interest amongst officers and men in ocean birds can transform a dull passage into an exciting adventure. Let us try and initiate more people into these delights.

So may I ask members to keep the Society's post bag full and to inspire others?

All good wishes for 1958.



ADMIRALTY, *November, 1957.*

EDITORIAL

It is with deep grief that we record in this issue the death of our late President, Vice-Admiral the Mackintosh of Mackintosh. His passing is an inestimable loss to R.N.B.W.S.

We are indeed honoured by the knowledge that Admiral Sir Charles Lambe, the present Second Sea Lord, has accepted our invitation to become President of the Society.

Commander C. E. Smith, R.N., was compelled to relinquish his post as Honorary Secretary and Treasurer in March, 1957, on proceeding abroad. We are much indebted to Commander Smith for the time and work he gave to the benefit of the Society. We wish him every success in his new appointment; at the same time we are very pleased to welcome, as his successor, Lieutenant Commander E. S. W. Maclure, R.N.

STATE OF THE SOCIETY

During the past two years sixty-four new members have joined, equally divided between the Royal and Merchant Navies. Thirty-one new members have joined this year, making a total membership of 210. Our special thanks are due to those members who have encouraged new members to join, and we hope that all members will continue to recruit others in this way.

REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

The section under "Sea Reports" reflects the splendid volume of observations received from members from almost every ocean in the world. Many of these reports include over a hundred separate observations during a passage, recorded with a care and precision which has given valuable information to help build up the ocean sea bird distribution plot.

We would like to stress how glad we are at all times to receive first reports from new members and to do our best to answer queries.

Commander C. E. Hamond, R.N., has continued to undertake the arduous task of analysing these reports. Largely due to him Sea Passage Bird Lists Nos. 5 and 6 have now been published. List No. 5 covers the route U.K. to America East Coast between Lat. 40°N.—50°N. List No. 6, U.K. to Caribbean Sea and Panama Canal via Azores.

The Orient Steamship Company have recently ordered copies of Lists 1, 2 and 4, have bound them in their own covers, and issued three copies to each ship's library and one copy for the bridge. Incidentally at our suggestion the Company has also ordered copies of Alexander's "Birds of the Ocean" for their fleet.

We believe that most members would find it interesting to possess these lists which cost 1s. 3d. each, and members in the Merchant Navy

might consider calling the attention of their shipping lines to their existence.

We also wish to thank all who have contributed articles, notes and photographs.

REPORTS OF LAND BIRDS AT SEA

These have been disappointingly few. May we call attention to the description of requirements published in Sea Swallow, 1956.

1/10/57. G. S. Tuck.

VICE-ADMIRAL LACHLAN MACKINTOSH OF MACKINTOSH

—*AN APPRECIATION*

By Surgeon Lieutenant Commander J. G. Harrison, r.n.v.r.

Like all who had the pleasure of knowing Admiral The Mackintosh of Mackintosh I was greatly saddened to hear of his sudden death at Moy. It was my good fortune to be his medical officer while he was Flag Officer, Germany, after the war. The Admiral was one of the select few who endear themselves to those around them almost on first acquaintance. He was an enthusiastic ornithologist and a keen shot; a wildfowler-naturalist in the line of Charles St. John and Abel Chapman.

I well remember the first afternoon following his arrival in Hamburg. We took him on a bird-watching trip to a famous Elbe marsh where he was thrilled by the aerial activities of the nesting Black-tailed Godwits. On the way out we had stopped the car to watch a Stork turning her eggs, and an ominous hissing told that a tyre valve had blown. A large group of German children gathered round and the Admiral enquired what their names were. When one turned out to be Heide (pronounced Heidi) this produced a "Heidi-hi" from the Admiral and "I can see I'm going to enjoy myself here." So did we all in his company.

Admiral Mackintosh was the first to discover Avocets nesting on Pagensand—the forerunners of a fine colony there today. At the time he had staying with him Professor Rudolph Drost, the head of the Heligoland Bird Observatory Station, and it was while William Loftie, his Flag Lieutenant, and I were rowing them ashore that the Admiral spotted a youngster swimming in front of us. The parent birds were soon on the scene putting on an elaborate injury feigning display.

The Admiral was out with us whenever he could spare the time, bird watching or shooting on the Elbe, our expeditions often ending with a huge meal at Admiralty House, presided over by Mrs. Mackintosh of Mackintosh. These evenings were followed by lessons from them both in Highland dancing; we were far from good but they both thoroughly enjoyed their uphill task, and energetic hours were passed in great merriment.

After we had returned from Germany I set out to write a book of our adventures there and was proud that Admiral Mackintosh should agree to write the foreword. This gave rise to a story of a customer in a bookshop in Inverness who enquired whether they had a copy—"But of course," was the reply, "The Mackintosh wrote the foreword!" I can still hear the Admiral laughing now, as the story was told at tea at his beloved Moy, overlooking the loch and the view to Lairig Ghru. And that is how I shall always remember him, laughing and full of charm and fun, a friend to all who knew him and one we will not forget, for "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die."

SEA REPORTS

(Received 1956 - 57)

SUMMARIES OF REPORTS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST

By COMMANDER C. E. HAMOND, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N.

(Note by Editor : All reports received are analysed and plotted. It is naturally of particular interest to receive reports from new ocean areas. It is equally important that repeated reports over the same routes should be forwarded. There is still a great deal to learn of the seasonal movement of certain sea birds over the same ocean routes.)

CAPTAIN P. P. O. HARRISON, M.V. "CAMBRIDGE," sends two really excellent reports of voyages from U.K. to New Zealand and return, via Panama Canal and Curacao.

The Atlantic and Caribbean part gave the final check required for the completion of Sea Passage Bird List No. 6.

Harrison's Pacific notes show increased and more varied bird life between 90° and 100°W., and again after 160°W. Round about 39°S. and 175°W. the following Albatrosses were in evidence:— Wandering *(D. exulans)*, Black-browed *(T. melanophris)*, Shy *(T. cauta)*, Light mantled sooty *(P. palpebrata)* besides Petrels:— White-chinned *(P. aequinoctialis)*, Cooks *(P. cooki)*, Giant *(M. giganteus)*, Pintado *(D. capensis)*, Great-winged *(P. macroptera)*, and Shearwaters:—Sooty *(P. griseus)*, Pale-footed *(P. carniepes)*, and Greybacked *(P. bulleri)*, besides many hundreds of Prions.

Approaching Port Nicholson he describes "a great concourse of birds, mainly tubinares, but also gulls, terns and cormorants.

Harrison has had the benefit of the advice and criticism of Dr. Falla in New Zealand, and his reports on the Pacific are no doubt among the most valuable records that we have.

FIRST OFFICER T. B. SCOTT—S.S. LAURENTIA (Donaldson Line), our most regular contributor, who sends us reports of voyages from Glasgow to Montreal (or to St. John's, New Brunswick during the winter) has provided very careful day to day reports, and in addition a month by month estimate of the incidence of the common species for any part of the trip. He tells of such matters as the proportion of dark phase fulmars, early and late records of great shearwaters, incidence of great black back gulls *(L. marinus)* right across the North Atlantic during bad weather in January and February, and areas in which great masses of Little Auks may be met with.

Scott's notes have contributed very greatly to the compilation of Sea Passage Bird List No. 5.

Kumlien's Gull *(L. leucopterus kumlieni)* was first spotted by Scott in the Straits of Belle Isle on 12th November, 1956. On 20th November in 49°N., 65°W., he noted 30 Kumlieni among

50 Herring Gulls *(L. argentatus)*, 50 Iceland Gulls *(L. leucopterus)* and one Great Black Back Gull. On 18th January, 1957, in 43°N., 64°W., Scott made a particular study of *L. kumlieni*—"They are very pale with a very small number of dark feathers at or near the wing tip. To distinguish them from Iceland Gulls requires a very close look."

CAPTAIN A. J. F. COLQUHOUN, M.B.E.—M.V. TYRIA (Anchor Line). These reports cover voyages from Norfolk, Virginia, to Avonmouth, and Glasgow to New York. They cover in the main a route south of those reported by Scott, and help to fill out our information for the Sea Passage Bird List No. 5. Colquhoun also comments on the presence of Great Black Back Gulls right across the ocean in very bad weather in February. Beyond this the observations are confirmatory. To save time in compiling future reports we would say that in the case of birds well known and positively identified no description is necessary, but comments on behaviour, and on weather and sea and air temperatures are always valuable.

ABLE SEAMAN R. GIBBS—H.M.S. MOUNTS BAY

Gibbs sends further reports of a cruise from the Caribbean southwards by the East Coast of South America, returning by the West Coast and Panama Canal to Bermuda and U.K.

The high spots of the voyage were the Falkland Islands, Tierra del Fuego, Islands in the Straits of Magellan and South West Chile. In these waters Gibbs watched, identified and photographed great numbers of birds. These included Wandering, Black-browed, Grey-headed and Yellow-nosed Albatrosses. Petrels varied from the Giant *(M. giganteus)* to the little Diving Petrel *(P. urinatrix)*.

The report makes very good reading and only lacks geographical positions at sea which makes plotting impossible. It is too long to print but the following few paragraphs are typical:—

"We left Fort Bulnes (Tierra del Fuego) that same day to proceed up the Patagonia Channels en route for Talcahuana in Central Chile. Again we traversed some of the most beautiful channels I have ever seen and ever hope to see again. Perhaps, however, I'll be lucky one day to get a trip down that way again.

"The birds we saw were surprisingly varied to the birds seen on the East Coast of South America. The first birds to follow the ship were Cinnamon Skuas *(C. skua chilensis)*, now known as a sub species of the Great Skua. I saw one chap feeding one from his hand and wondered if this is a usual practice of these birds, or perhaps they were just extra hungry at the time.

"These Skuas were soon joined by Southern Black-backed Gulls *(L. dominicanus)* and a few Simeon Gulls *(L. belcheri)* and about a dozen Patagonian Black-headed Gulls *(L. maculipennis)*. All these gulls were being attacked regularly by the Skuas. On 25th October we met up with absolutely hundreds of Black-browed Albatrosses, and out to Port I saw a large colony of them breeding on the sheltered smooth rocky glen floor. It was the most wondrous and unexpected sight of

the commission. After these came the Penguins. First a colony of Rockhoppers *(E. cristatus)* swimming for all they were worth to get away from the ship ; then came a few Gentoos *(P. papua)* swimming on the surface ; then unfortunately it started to get dark and all these wonderful creatures were no longer visible to our poor human eyes. The following morning we sailed into many Magellan Penguins *(S. magellanicus)*, and then into waters absolutely teeming with Little Petrels, and we had to keep catching them and letting them go again. These proved to be Hornby's Storm Petrels *(O. hornbei)*. On the same day we saw three Inca Terns *(L. inca)*."

It was a memorable voyage for a young man with a keen appreciation of birds, and he made the best of it with his excellent report and photos.

SECOND OFFICER W. R. KNIGHT—M.V. BRITISH ESCORT.

Knight sends us two reports (1) U.K. to Canaries, Malta, Persian Gulf ; (2) Cape to Persian Gulf.

A lucky sight was that of some hundreds of White Storks crossing the Gulf of Suez, easterly "in long straggling lines from horizon to horizon."

We must question his reports of Sooty Shearwaters and Gannets off the Arabian coast. These were probably Wedge-tailed Shearwaters *(P. pacificus)*, and certainly Blue-faced Boobies *(S. dactylatra)*. Knight is uncertain about the gulls and in reporting *L. fuscus* off Cape Agulhas asks if Southern Ocean Gulls are the same as the European. The answer is No. The Southern Black-backed Gull is *L. dominicanus*. He mentions that all the Herring Gulls in the Gulf have yellow legs. This is the Yellow-legged Gull *(L. cachinnans)*. His third query is for the correct name for the Bosun and/or Marline Spike Bird. This is the Tropic Bird *(Phaethon)* of which there are three species.

It is very satisfactory when students pass their difficulties on to us as, if we don't know the answer, we can probably get in touch with someone who does. Knight tells us that he is now coming ashore to study for Extra Master and we wish him success in the great adventure, though the study of birds must take a back seat for a while.

T. V. BOYS (Ornithologist to Cambridge British North Borneo Expedition)—M.V. LAERTES. Sailing from Amsterdam to Singapore he reports two hundred Common Terns *(S. hirundo)* nesting on circular channel marks at the West end of the North Sea Canal.

In the Straits of Gibraltar 27/6/56 "a dense flock c.400 Great Shearwaters *(P. gravis)* circling and settled, with a very small percentage of Cory's with them ; three hundred plus Storm Petrels, almost certainly Wilson's, off Cadiz."

Off the Tunisian coast 5,000 Cory's Shearwaters *(P. diomedia)* with trawlers "sea stiff with them."

Beyond these the notes follow the Sea Passage Bird Lists.

He makes a number of positive reports of Wilson's Storm Petrels *(O. oceanicus)* in the Arabian Sea.

Lieutenant Commander G. S. Willis, R.N.R., has made frequent previous reports of Wilson's Petrels in this area.

ENGINEER APPRENTICE J. O. BRINKLEY—M.S. DESMOULEA.

A very keen observer who has sent us notes from N. and S. Atlantic, Caribbean, Cape, Persian Gulf, and thence to Far East.

We would like to encourage Brinkley in every way ; we are sure that as he gains experience his observations will form a very valuable record. An instance is a note on the distribution of Lesser Black-backed Gulls in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, the former being the dark race *L. fuscus fuscus*, while those in the Gulf appear to be invariably the lighter type *L. fuscus graellsii*. We have also noticed this, and the fact appears to be well known, but it shows careful observation on the part of a comparative beginner.

Brinkley is rather inclined to see Kermadoc Petrels, including one in the Caribbean. We questioned this but he countered with a Kittiwake in the Persian Gulf! His notes otherwise conform with our records.

We congratulate Brinkley on his efforts.

CHIEF OFFICER W. L. N. FISKEN—M.V. BRITISH GUARDIAN.

Two reports: (1) Capetown to La Plata ; (2) La Plata to Persian Gulf via Cape.

The first report covered a very bad passage with gales and heavy seas. Day to day reports show always a few, but never many, birds mostly *D. exulans*, Giant *(M. giganteus)*, Schlegels *(P. incerta)*, and White-chinned *(P. aequinoctialis)* Petrels, and Wilson's Storm Petrel.

—"With wind gusting to force 9/10 and ship floundering with everyone washed out fore and aft, owing to having pooped a sea, the Albatrosses and Petrels glided easily past the ship."—

However a Schlegel was found in an exhausted state on Monkey Island and remained in a box on the bridge for 3 days when it took off in an "aided flight" shaping course for Uruguay to the Northward.

Much the same birds were seen on the return crossing in addition to Black-browed and Yellow-nosed Albatrosses, and Cape Gannet *(S. Capensis)* when nearing the Cape. Very few birds in Indian Ocean except Roseate Terns *(S. dougalli)* in the Mozambique Channel.

The ship has been away nearly a year and Fisken has only been out of the ship for a total of five hours in ten months! He looks forward to "stretching his legs on the grass."

COMMANDER B. S. JONES, O.B.E., R.N., H.M.S. SUPERB. Passage Bahrein to U.K. via Cape.

The observations were made by various observers, some of whom, as he says, were inexperienced. The result is a preponderance of reports properly marked "uncertain."

The "positive" reports are in general in line with previous plottings and records. A number of reports of Arctic Skuas *(S. parasiticus)* came from the West Coast of Africa. It seems probable that some at least of these should refer to *S. pomarinus*, which is very prevalent in these

waters in winter—especially one in Lat. 10°N. which "showed a great deal of white on wings above and below."

The following birds were picked up on board and released after identification:—

Leach's Storm Petrel *(O. leucorhoa)* in Lat. 10°S., Long. 4°W.
Sooty Tern *(S. fuscata)* in 0°33'S., 7°20'W.
White-faced Storm Petrel *(P. marina)* in 9°N., 16°W.
Red-necked Phalarope *(L. lobatus)* in 16°N., 57°E., found dead on board.

Reports of this nature are useful in spreading the interest among a number of people, and giving them experience in observation and identification.

CHIEF ELECTRICIAN A. JONES — S.S. ROMNY (Lamport and Holt Lines Ltd). Jones has sent a carefully prepared report of a passage from Bahia Blanca, South America, to Las Palmas, Canary Islands, during August. This provides confirmatory information over a route on which our records are thin. After leaving Rio de Janiero the only birds observed until close off Las Palmas were one Magnificent Frigate Bird and three White-tailed Tropic Birds.

CHIEF RADIO OFFICER F. W. GREAVES—S.S. LEICESTERSHIRE.

Greaves sends three reports: U.K. to Rangoon via Cape; Return Voyage; U.K. to Rangoon via Suez.

These are very clear and careful reports mainly following existing records.

On 20th February in 22°N., 17°W., he saw a flock of 50 Grey Phalaropes. These showed "conspicuously white underparts, dark legs and feet, and greyish upper parts." They had evidently started on their gradual journey North.

From the Cape Verde Islands area no birds were seen until 22°50'S. where the first Pintado Petrels showed up. This is a very empty part of the ocean except in the vicinity of Ascension and St. Helena. In 31°S. 33°E. he reports large flocks of Soft-plumaged Petrels *(P. mollis)*.

Outwards via Suez nothing unusual was seen, but he reports Pale-footed Shearwaters *(P. carneipes)* between Ceylon and Burma on several occasions, and two White-winged Black Terns *(Chlidonia leucoptera)* in 6°N., 81°S.

CAPTAIN J. D. MITCHELL—M.V. BEAVERBANK. South Australia to Panama including calls at Tonga Isles, Suva, Rotuna and Tarawa.

This is a first report of a new member, and is of particular interest as we have few records from these island areas. He remarks on the greater frequency of bird gatherings far from any land which he suggests might be due to the presence of Japanese fishing vessels right across the Equatorial belt. His positive records include the ordinary Boobies *(piscatrix, leucogaster* and *dactylatra)*, Phoenix Petrel *(P. parvirostris)*, Herald Petrel *(P. heraldica)*, Christmas Shearwater *(P. nativitatis)*.

On August 16th in 6° 45'N., 116°W., lower air and sea temperatures indicated the Humboldt Current and on that day large mixed multitudes of Christmas Shearwaters, Hawaian and Herald Petrels and Storm Petrels *(Sp)*. On following day, in the influence of a warm southerly set, very few birds were seen.

We shall hope for more such reports from Captain Mitchell.

M. J. D'OYLY—M.V. HERTFORD. U.K. to New Zealand and back, 24/5/56 to 28/10/56.

The following note, printed verbatim, records what we believe to be something very unusual:—

". . . The interesting sight of Sooty Terns *(S. fuscata)* catching flying fish while they (the flying fish) were 'on the wing' above the water—occasionally the Terns dived a short distance to try to catch them. It is also interesting to note that both the fish and the birds flew into the breeze, the birds approaching the fish from behind. While this was going on Magnificent Frigate Birds circled the flock and plundered those lucky enough to catch a fish."

This took place in 01°7'N., 93°4'W., and is the first report we have had of birds catching flying fish 'on the wing.' We have some records of Boobies chasing them and diving onto them as soon as they touched down.

SUB LIEUTENANT J. BRANEGAN—3rd FRIGATE SQUADRON. Four reports mostly from the coasts of China and Japan.

Brannegan is careful not to claim a "positive" unless he is so, and many of his birds marked 'U' are of birds normal to the position. He definitely identifies a number of interesting birds. In 12°N., 112°E. he saw over 50 White-tailed Tropic Birds *(P. lepturus)*. In 33°N., 139°E over a dozen Black-footed Albatrosses *(D. nigripes)* followed the ship and identification was substantiated by photographs. He made the acquaintance of Japanese Gulls, Christmas Frigate Birds and Caspian Terns at Macao. He records White-faced Shearwaters *(P. leucomelas)* and Swinhoe's Storm Petrel *(O. monorhis)* off Japan.

H.M. YACHT BRITANNIA, 29th August, 1956—23rd February, 1957. An extensive report of observations by various observers in a voyage from U.K. to: Free Town, Sierra Leone, Luanda, Angela, Cape Town, Mombasa, Mauritius, Zanzibar, Colombo, Melbourne, Lyttleton (N.Z.), Chatham Islands, Deception Islands, Falklands, South Georgia, Gough Islands, Tristan da Cunha, St. Helena, Ascension Islands, Bathurst!

The following birds were ringed and released:—

	Ring Number
White-tailed Tropic Bird, 8.9.56, 2°50'S., 6°E.	2123
Sooty Tern, 19.9.56, 5°24'S., 4°15'E.	1281
Sooty Tern, 20.10.56, 3°26'S., 56°37'E	1282
Black-browed Albatross, 9.1.57, 52°S., 58°W.	6081
Sooty Shearwater, 20.1.57, 12°28'S., 9°25'W.	1283

This excellent report is too long to record in detail. It provides much useful information for our records, and is the subject of a review by W. R. P. Bourne, M.B.O.U.

CAPTAIN J. S. LANDERS—M.V. "EL NASSEY"

A further report has been received from this keen observer for a short trip from Abadan to Aden.

He reports considerable numbers of what he identifies as "Persian Gulf Shearwaters" *(P. persicus)* in 24½°N., 58°E. Every observer sees these Shearwaters in the Arabian and Persian areas and they are variously repored as *P. assimilis, P. chermineri,* and *P. persicus.* They are common in many parts, and we are not clear and need guidance as to whether all or which of these three species, if indeed they are separate species, are typical of this area, and also any hints on sight recognition.

In 18°N., 57¾°E. on 17th September, 60+ Red-necked Phalaropes are reported—sea temperature 72°F. At sunset "hundreds of Aden Gulls flying to roost on Kuria Muria Islands."

On the same day and place he reports a Pintado Petrel *(Daption capense).* To quote his remarks: "Double white patches on wings unmistakable. Underparts very light and back lighter than wings. Flew round and settled in wake near some garbage. Could this be a vagrant?"

In his covering letter he says that the Second Officer also at once picked it out of Alexander as the only possible. This seems a very far cry for a "Cape Pigeon," but is it any stranger than a Black-browed Albatross in Shetland or a Frigate Bird in the Hebrides?

Landers mentions that between Ras al Hadd and Kuria Muria Island the sea temperature dropped 15 to 10° (i.e. to 72°F.) and has since warmed up again to 88°F.—"It was in this stretch that most birds occurred."

He ends—"Also, although nothing to do with ornithology an unusual number of Manta Rays have been seen on the surface. . ."

Note by Editor: This report was posted from Aden on a Tuesday, had been plotted and summarised by the following Friday and was included in this report four days after despatch from Aden!

We also acknowledge the receipt of Sea Reports from: Commander Humphreys, Lieutenant M.C. Powys Maurice, J. A. F. Jenkins, Captain G. E. Hodgson, Captain E. F. Aikman and G. H. Gush, M.B.O.U.

Other reports of special interest received from Captain P. P. O. Harrison, First Officer T. B. Scott, David Stratton (voyage of M.V. "Magga Dan" to Antarctic), and Captain J. Wilkinson, R.N., have been referred to our Advisory Ornithologists and are not available for inclusion in this issue.

SEA REPORT BY H.M. YACHT BRITANNIA

August, 1956—23rd February, 1957

—Review by W. R. P. Bourne, M.B.O.U.

This is altogether a model report ; it would be nice if it could be reproduced on a large scale and distributed to all sea-going birdwatchers to demonstrate how things should be done. The crew of the Royal Yacht do not appear to have had any special knowledge of birds, but they were supplied with adequate reference books (notably Alexander's "Birds of the Ocean" and Murphy's "Oceanic Birds of South America," surely the only indispensable books on sea-birds ever written, and sea passage lists prepared by the R.N.B.W.S. and Dr. R. A. Falla, of the Dominion Museum, Wellington, New Zealand). These notes have been tabulated with full details of time, date, position, wind direction, behaviour of birds, and (most important) air and water temperature at each observation. An appendix lists birds ringed. The whole report has been bound and distributed to interested quarters. The only records which appear seriously suspect are those of Leach's Petrels seen south of the Falkland Islands in waters normally reserved for Wilson's Petrels ; otherwise I should like to congratulate unreservedly those involved in its production.

The report contains a mass of detailed information concerning the normal distribution of many common sea birds which cannot be summarised in detail here, but there are other notes of more particular interest. Thus off tropical West Africa in early September the Light-mantled Sooty Albatross was first sighted at 02°23'N., 03°19'W., and the Yellow nosed Albatross at 08°18'S., 12°47'E., much further north than they are usually expected on the direct route from Cape Town to Europe, perhaps because the route nearer the coast crosses the cool Benguella current in lower latitudes.

Equally, on passage from Mombasa to Mauritius at the end of September Abbotts Booby was seen at 10°04'S., 50°32'E., one day after passing Assumption Island, although it has been reported extinct in the Indian Ocean.

There are a very large number of valuable records from the little known southern parts of the Pacific and South Atlantic from New Zealand via Chatham Islands, Deception Island, the Falklands, South Georgia, and Gough Island to Tristan da Cunha, notably Barithe Skuas as far south as 64°35'S., 62°48'W., and the record ends with the ringing of a Sooty Shearwater near Ascension on 24th January, a most surprising date for it to be in these waters.

NOTES FROM ABROAD

MALAGAS ISLAND — SALDANHA BAY — SOUTH AFRICA

By Lieutenant Commander W. S. Stewart, R.N., and
Lieutenant A. C. Currey, R.N.

Note by Editor: This report was supported by a number of photographs, and we only regret that these cannot be included in this report.

On 25th April, 1957, we paid a visit to Malagas Island, a bird sanctuary lying at the mouth of Saldanha Bay, roughly 120 miles North North West of Capetown.

The island is inhabited by two officials of the South African Fisheries Board, and (for six months of the year only) by about twelve labourers employed in collecting guano.

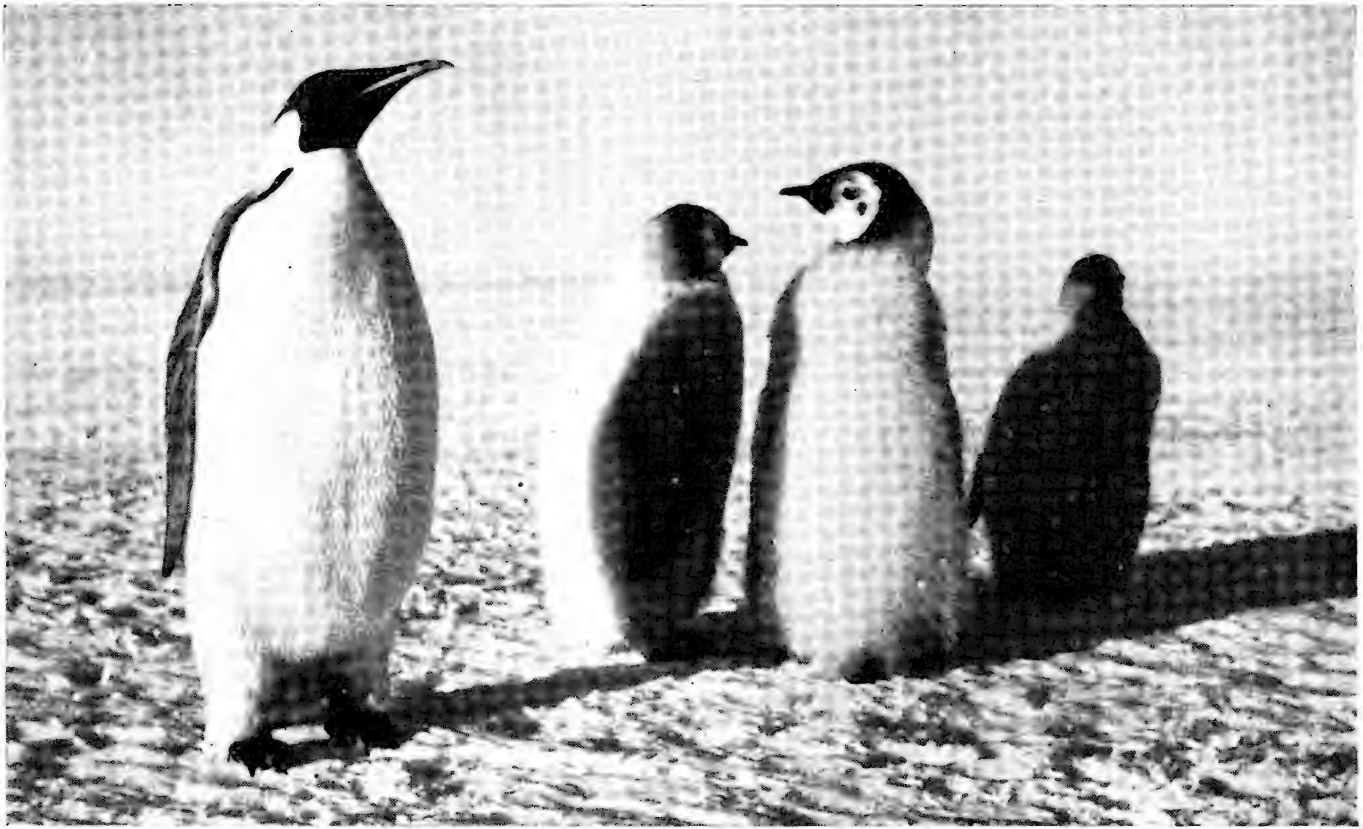
The island is about ¾-mile long by ½-mile wide. It appears to be formed of a single slab of rock sloping down to the Atlantic and rising to not more than 25 feet above H.W.S. on the landward side. It is entirely populated by a great colony of Cape Gannets, a considerable colony of Jackass Penguins and some Cape Cormorants.

THE CAPE GANNET *(S. capensis)*

We estimated that well over 50,000 Cape Gannets were on or near the island during our visit. The keeper stated that 2,000 had been ringed, but during our tour of three hours only a dozen or so ringed birds were observed. The breeding season appears to run from October through to April, some birds hatching two clutches. We had evidently arrived at the very tail end of the nesting season, as no birds were seen incubating clutches, but downy young were the order of the day. The nests themselves are mere depressions in the ground.

The partially grown birds are driven from the breeding grounds and exiled to a separate part of the island. The paired adults were effusive in their mutual greetings and a great deal of low throaty purring noise, necking, rubbing and scissor play with beaks was going on the whole time.

When landing the birds slowly lost height and speed until about 2½ feet off the ground when they proceeded to "fall out of the sky." They all seemed surprised when this happened; perhaps due to the crowded living quarters. If a bird was lifted and put down in a different place it was immediately pecked and chivvied by its neighbours until it returned to its original base.



Emperor Penguins and Chicks—Halley Bay, Antarctica

JACKASS PENGUINS *(Spheniscus demersus)*

Two to three thousand Penguins live on the seaward side of the island, mostly among a jumble of boulders. We saw a number of young, and some very old birds whose tail feathers were reduced to a mere skeleton, and who were much less nimble than the others, reminding one irresistably of "Aunty" in "Pip, Squeak and Wilfred."

CAPE CORMORANTS *(P. capensis)*

A small number of Cape Cormorants—rather less than 200—live on the island. They nest on raised boulders, accumulations of guano, anything that puts their nests out of easy reach of the Gannets.

SOUTH AFRICAN DIVISION OF FISHERIES REPORT

An article in the *Cape Times* in 1957 referring to these species in the area of St. Helena Bay (some 30 miles north of Malagas Island) quotes from the Fisheries Report as follows:—

"Dr. Davis considers, on the basis of the known average daily consumption of 4lb. of fish per gannet, that 112,000 gannets in St. Helena Bay consume 29,500 tons of Pilchards and 8,700 tons of Maasbankers in a year. Similarly 20,000 cormorants in the same area consume 1,500 tons of Pilchards and 250 tons of Maasbankers, and 5,000 Penguins eat 1,000 tons of Pilchards and 60 tons of Maasbankers.

Taken together the three birds eat 32,000 tons of Pilchards, and 9,000 tons of Maasbankers in a year or 20% of the Union's total catch!

Nevertheless Dr. Davis does not recommend that any steps should be taken at present to control these sea birds *(which seems a very charitable outlook—Editor)*.

EMPEROR PENGUINS

(Aptenodytes Forsterii)

By Surgeon Lieutenant Commander D. G. Dalgleish, R.N.

On two occasions in my life, I have lived for many months as a close neighbour to Emperor Penguins. The Emperor is the biggest and rarest of all living penguins, (fossilized ones up to 6 feet and more have been found in New Zealand), and few people have ever seen them and even fewer have ever been lucky enough to see them so well as I have. Apart from the peculiar place in which they choose to live, that is as far south as possible and still by the sea, they have one peculiarity not shared by any other animal that I am aware of. They breed in the winter ; but this is not chance or perversity, it is so that the moment when the chick is grown enough to fend for itself and able to swim, coincides with the breaking of the sea ice and its movement north as pack ice ; for it is in the pack ice that the Emperor lives when he is not at his rookery breeding.

Three companions and I discovered a very small rookery in Marguerite Bay (68°S.) on the west coast of Grahamland, in October, 1948. Although the smallest it was only the fourth ever discovered. Three of us spent the three months of winter living in a tent observing them and collecting a series of their embryos ; we ate the rest of the eggs scrambled and it was excellent. On a minute island, not more than 50 yards across and 90 feet high, 3 men, 18 dogs and 150 Emperor Penguins spent the winter of 1949. Most of that time there was no sun and the temperature was as low as minus 42°F.

The second rookery was discovered in January, 1956, in two hitherto unknown and unnamed adjacent bays (at 75°35'S.) on the Caird Coast of the Weddell Sea by the Advance Party of the Royal Society's Antarctic I.G.Y. Expedition. These bays are now known as Halley and Emperor Bays. This was only the 6th or 7th rookery ever discovered but our estimates of its population are between 15,000 and 20,000 birds. They were my closest neighbours for the ensuing year, as they lived on the sea ice only two to three miles from our base.

From the end of January to the middle of April you'll only find Emperors in the pack ice ; all their rookeries are empty apart from their dead and we estimated that their infant mortality may be as high as 25%. By the end of March, temperatures are usually sufficiently low and the days calm enough for the freeze up to get going. By mid-April the sea ice will be 1 to 2 feet thick and by the break up next summer it will be 8 to 12 feet. At this time therefore, the breeding adults all return, within a few days of one another, looking extremely sleek and healthy ; they all stand around in a noisy group chattering away, apparently comparing notes on their summer holidays. Mostly it's a discordant honking but already some are trying out, rather off-key, the staccato, warbling, chatter on a descending scale that later becomes so typical and so important a part of their egg or chick display. Pairing

takes place and this is the only time when they appear to wish for a little privacy—if such a word describes standing a few yards away from the remaining thousands. Copulation is performed in the same precarious-looking manner practised by other penguins—the male standing on the prostrate female's back and joining beak to beak and cloaca to cloaca, meanwhile using their flippers to aid in balancing.

They all lay their single egg within a few days of one another, around the beginning of June and a couple of days later mother penguin has handed it over to father and she goes off to the open sea and pack ice. Father places the egg *on* his feet and by sitting back on his heels and generally hunching down, he gets the egg against his abdomen and tucked below his Xiphisternum so that a fold of abdominal skin and feathers comes down in front. So he sits, with no food, with frequent howling blizzards up to 100 knots, with temperatures as low as minus 60°F. with no sun (in fact in pitch darkness), for seven to eight weeks, quietly and apparently uncomplainingly incubating. Then on a memorable day in August (I'm sure it must be most memorable to them) the egg hatches and out comes a chirruping chick covered in sparse grey down. Even then Father still has some food remaining in his crop to give to his offspring.

At the same time (how do they know?) all the mothers return with very full crops and, I should imagine, guilty consciences. Not surprisingly they are heavy enough to knock father off the chick with their gleaming yellow fronts and take over the care of their infants. The fathers are then permitted to go away to the sea and have a feed, after which they all seem to get muddled up and feed any chick who importunes for food. Their food appears to be mainly Squids but fish and krill are also taken. To get to the open water or tide crack or pool kept unfrozen by constant use, they travel on their bellies, using their feet for propulsion and only occasionally walking upright. By December the chicks are as tall as their parents, i.e. over 3 feet but twice as large in girth as they are covered in their soft grey down. Then by early January, even when still half covered in down, they take to the sea and swim off to drifting ice floes. Their first adult plumage is not so flamboyant as their parents and it is thought that they live in the pack for two years before being fully mature. Then, they too will return to their rookery to join in making the primeval scene of thousands of birds huddled together on the sea ice with their red beaks, orange auricular patches and sleek black heads flashing in the low sun, while behind them towers a 100-foot cliff of silent, blue ice.

SOME OBSERVATIONS OF BIRDS OF PREY

BRITISH NORTH BORNEO

COMMANDER E. M. NORMAN, R.N.R., *Master of s.s. "Ho Sang" trading between ports in the "Lands below the winds," writes of some ship visitors :—*

"During the migration season we always have a pair of Peregrines on board, beautiful birds, but it is a miracle that any of the smaller migrants that rest on board survive at all! The Peregrines sit on the yard amongst their victims just like a father, but once a bird leaves the ship for 200 yards they glide off without excitement until they reach their prey. I have never seen one get away. The falcons eat them on the wing down wind, clean their talons, and then return once again to perch amongst the remainder.

A most exciting battle took place one morning. An immature Egret left the ship and the bird was forced into the sea. The Peregrine attacked time after time with screams of frustration until the Egret took to the wing only to be caught 200 feet off the ship. The Peregrine took his prey to the plate under the foremast lamp and spent the best part of an hour tearing it to pieces.

These Peregrines also make their home on board when there is a typhoon in the offing and small birds come for shelter.

There are at least a pair of White-headed Sea Eagles in every port. They are larger than the Ospreys and at least three times the size of the kites which feed on floating offal. I have seen a Sea Eagle lift a fish out of the water equal to its own weight."

Commander Norman mentions the large number of migrants he has seen in tropical surroundings, and we shall look forward to further reports.—Editor.

CAPTAIN J. B. MITCHELL, M.V. "Beaverbank" whilst on passage westbound across the Pacific from Cape Mala to the Tonga Islands in November, 1956, quotes an instance of a Peregrine Falcon coming aboard close off the Cocos Islands. It remained on board for eight days, a matter of some 2,500 miles. Every day it flew off like an arrow about eight times and returned with a Storm Petrel (species not quoted). It made its home on the mainmast emergency lamp gallows and tabling, and made a charnel house of this vicinity. Latterly it grew weak and missed a couple of strikes, and one morning it was no longer there. It may have succumbed to thirst.

CAPTAIN G. E. HODGES, S.S. "British Crown," on the U.K. to Persian Gulf run refers in his reports to the regular visits of falcons, sometimes for days, to his ship sailing along the Arabian coast, and to Wilson's Petrels (in season) being brought to the truck and eaten by Peregrines,

SHOW ME THE WAY TO GO HOME?—AN INDIAN CROW OFF COLOMBO

The Indian Crow is a notoriously cunning fowl, and the following report from CHIEF RADIO OFFICER F. W. GREAVES, of s.s. "Leicestershire" raises the question as to whether the occurrence was pure coincidence.

"On leaving Colombo on 24th July, 1957, en route for Rangoon we discovered a stowaway Indian Crow on board being cared for by the Lascar crew. Sixty hours later we passed another Bibby liner homeward bound. While there was still only a smudge of smoke on the horizon ahead the crow flew up to a high point in our fore rigging, showing great excitement and cawing continuously. It then flew up and down the length of the ship and settled again until the homeward bound ship was abeam about one mile distant. The crow then uttered a few farewell caws, flew across and was watched through glasses until it boarded the other ship—All of which has given much cause for thought."

A MOST UNUSUAL RECORD—CAPTAIN C. P. ROBINSON, m.v. *Rakaia*—New Zealand to Balboa.

(Note by Editor: We know of no bird resembling *a large black swan with white wing tips except a black swan. The bird was seen at close quarters, but what a place to see one!)*

Quote: "2nd September, 1956, at 1715 ship's time in 42°02'S., 174°29'W., observed a bird resembling a large black swan with white wing tips, flying strongly into force 7 gale at 15 to 20 feet above the waves. The bird crossed ahead and then flew down starboard side. The nearest land was the Chatham Islands bearing S.W. distant 130 miles."

A SECOND VISIT TO THE SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS

By CAPTAIN J. WILKINSON, D.S.C., G.M., R.N.—H.M.S. Protector

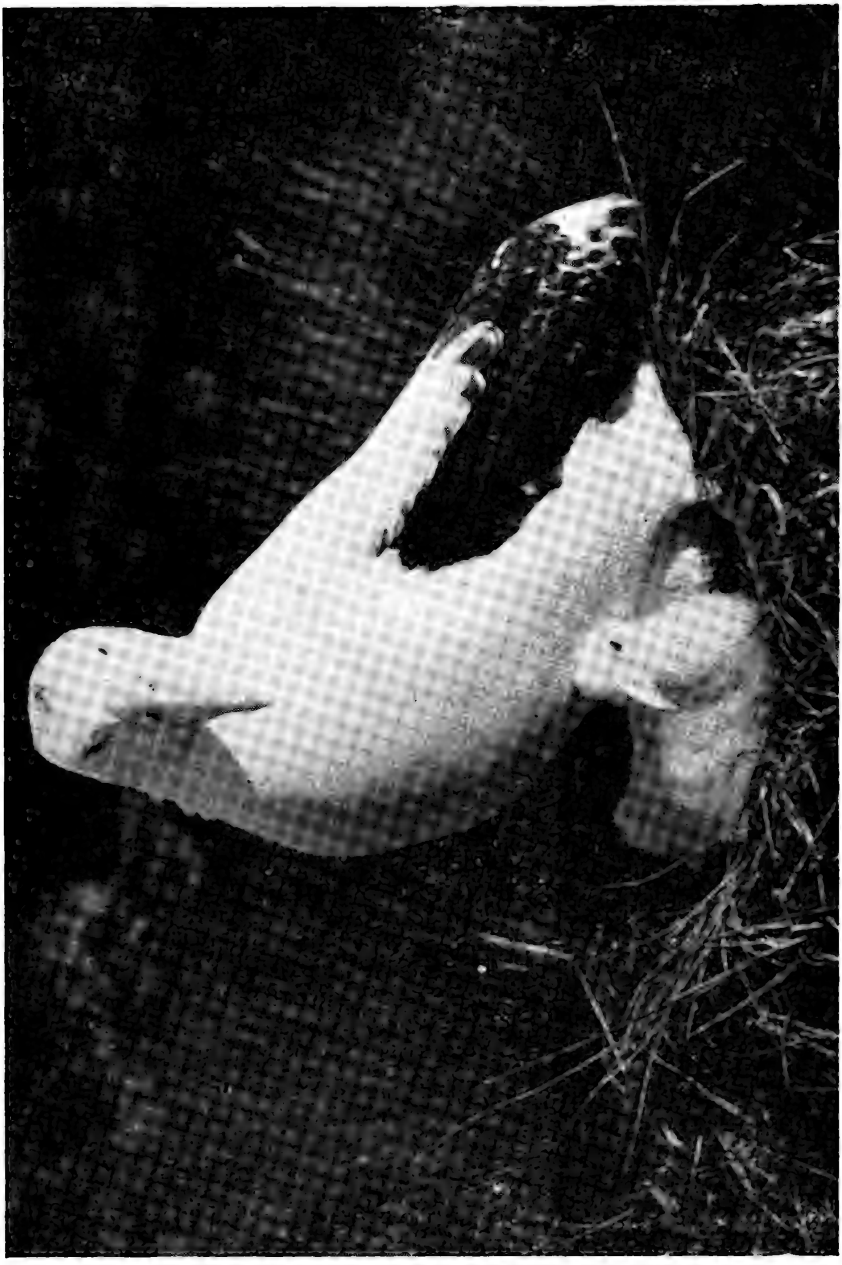
Note by Editor: An earlier report of the bird life of these islands observed during mid March, 1956, appeared in Sea Swallow, 1956. To avoid repetition certain portions of Captain Wilkinson's second report have been omitted, and an abridged version only is included below.

The South Sandwich group of islands lie between Lat. 56° and 59°S. and about Long. 27°W. They are volcanic, and while most are covered with an ice cap, and bordered by ice cliffs, some retain sufficient heat to dissipate the ice caps. The Islands are uninhabited.

Protector left South Georgia on 2nd December, 1956, to try to establish as much as possible of the northern limit of the pack ice to the east of the Islands.

After visiting Montagu Island the ship anchored between Candlemas and Vindication Islands. The North East point of Vindication Island, Low Point, is a rocky spit with steep cliffs leading to the ice cap above. We made a helicopter landing, the first recorded landing. Vast numbers of Southern Fulmars, Cape Pigeon and Snow Petrel were nesting all the way up the cliff, and we were able to scramble far enough up to inspect nests of the petrels. Most of them were in ledges under rock formations, but some were in the open rubble. The birds sat tight and ejected the usual unpleasant petrel oil at any approach closer than about four feet. In the case of the Snow Petrels this fluid was a bright red colour, and in the case of the Cape Pigeons a dark green.

In all the Islands we found Southern Fulmars, Cape Pigeon and Snow Petrels nesting in vast numbers. In addition we sighted normal numbers of Wilson's Petrels, Black-bellied Storm Petrels, Giant Petrels, Skuas and Wandering Albatross, and about 30 miles away on each side there were Whale Birds and Antarctic Petrels near the pack ice. No nests of any of these were found although I suspect that all the Petrels and Skuas nest on the Islands. There are suitable sites for Whale Birds, and they may well nest on the Islands, and by adopting their usual habit of not leaving their nests in daylight, to avoid the Skuas, they could easily nest there undetected by us on this visit.



Wandering Albatross and Chick—South Georgia

Photo by Ldg. Photographer Clayton, R.N., and published by kind permission of Captain John Wilkinson, D.S.C., G.M., R.N.

I FELL A PREY TO BIRD WATCHING

By Captain P. P. O. Harrison, m.v. " Cambridge "

Until three years ago I had what may be described as a ' negative ' outlook on sea-bird life : a bird either *wasn't* an Albatross or it *wasn't* a Gull! I then had the good fortune, through my meterological activities, to meet Dr. R. A. Falla, Director of The Dominion Museum, Wellington, and representative of the R.N.B.W.S. in New Zealand. With the encouragement he gave me I became an ardent Bird Watcher.

Following the rule I have adopted with meteorology I note every bird seen. This may seem like making oneself a slave to one's hobby. But the average shipmaster has ample time at his disposal, and an absorbing hobby is what he needs—and bird watching is an absorbing occupation. Ever present is the sense of anticipation ; one scans the water in the hope that a Shearwater may appear above the crest of the swell, or looks aloft for, perhaps, a Frigate Bird, Tropic Bird or Skua. One enters new seas or ocean currents, such as the Humboldt, with an air of expectancy. If the expected specimen does not appear then the watching is its own reward. It is good for one's brain, eyes, lungs and health generally.

So that a continuous record may be kept it is necessary to have the assistance of the watch-keeping officers ; and to get them to give this voluntarily their interest must be aroused. In most instances this is soon achieved. They are called on to assist in noting characteristics and in identification. On the chart-table is the Sea Report Sheet on which they may make notes, and in the book-shelf Alexander's ' Birds of the Ocean,' Fleming's ' Some South Pacific Sea-bird Logs,' and my own Logs covering several similar passages. It is not long before an Officer learns to distinguish between the wing movement of a gull and a shearwater.

For " spotting " I use a telescope, and experience no difficulty in pinpointing or in following a bird, even one with such an erratic flight as a Storm Petrel. Identification of these is extremely difficult unless their particular markings are seen, and this is hardly possible without optical aid. In most museums in the Antipodes there is a section devoted to ornithology, and in these, with the aid of my notes, I am able to check up on doubtful cases. The Ornithological Departments of the Brisbane and Wellington Museums are exceptionally good.

The ordinary routine of sea life, and particularly watch-keeping, is made more interesting through bird watching. Occasionally a tragic or amusing incident presents itself : Passing through the Cook Strait, with a following gale, and amidst a great concourse of birds, the Southern Black-backed Gulls kept pace with the ship but were headed in the opposite direction! I noted an absence of Albatrosses. They had evidently been avoiding the gale and joined after the ship had got under the lee of Cape Paliser. Work came to a standstill one day whilst all hands ' and the Cook ' watched the schooling of fish astern of a Penguin in Napier Harbour. In an attempt to obtain a meal the penguin

attacked the shoals of small fry that cruised alongside the ship. These instantly took up station in line astern of their attacker and maintained this position until he desisted. But there was no escape for them from the Australian Gannets that flocked into the harbour from their sanctuary on Cape Kidnappers and gave us a fine display of diving each evening.

In the Bass Strait one November hundreds of thousands of Short-tailed Shearwaters were seen. A flock would rise before us like a cloud, wheeling and glinting in the sun. The flocks could clearly be seen on the Radar screen. Matthew Flinders, when he and George Bass were exploring the Strait, estimated that twelve million birds formed one flock. In the Bass Strait too, I have seen a Southern Skua attacking white-faced Storm Petrels; and, conversely, Silver Gulls 'gang up' and attack a Skua as it sat perched sullenly on the fore truck.

I look forward to a Pacific crossing with keen anticipation. On my last outward passage fifty separate species were identified including Albatrosses, Gulls, Petrels, Terns, Frigate-birds, Pelicans, Gannets, Cormorants and Tropic-birds. There was not one birdless day—although I often have several between Pitcairn Island and New Zealand. But I can always be sure of a good send off and an impressive Reception Committee. In the Gulf of Panama Sooty and Royal Terns, Blue-faced and Red-footed Boobies, Simeon and Franklyn's Gulls, Frigate-Birds, Pelicans and Cormorants; and when embarking the Wellington Pilot a clamorous welcome by Pintado and Giant Petrels, Dusky, Wedge-tailed and Pale-footed Shearwaters, Silver and Southern Black-backed Gulls, White-fronted Terns, hundreds of Prions, Australian Gannets, Common Cormorants, wandering Albatrosses — and one pure white Royal Albatross. On this passage I intercepted six Arctic Terns southward bound; and, unexpectedly, a Pintado Petrel off the Galapagos Islands.

We are all familiar with the noisy Gull; another vociferous family is Phaethontidae. The Tropic Bird appears to take advantage of the thermal currents rising from the funnel, and often within the Tropics its petulant cry may be heard overhead at night. It follows ships, usually in groups of half-a-dozen or so, but is not a scavenger. Although it can be seen diving for food during the day it is also, apparently, a night feeder. Occasionally a Tropic Bird hits the ship in the dark and lands on deck. Invariably it disgorges the contents of its stomach, which consist of flying-fish and squid. I have preserved specimens of the genus Cypsilurus (flying fish) and of the family Loliginidae (squid). Squids are said to be sensitive to light, and to seek the depths during daylight: hence the nocturnal activities of the Tropic Bird. Flying above the ship the phosphorescent glow on the water, and also the light from the accommodation, assists the bird in spotting its prey in the dark. A notice should be posted asking that the Bridge be informed of any birds found on deck; and any disgorged fish should be preserved and sent to a Natural History Museum for identification. Tropic Birds are vicious and must be handled cautiously. On deck they are completely helpless and have to be assisted overboard.

In his summary of five Pacific crossings Fleming's southernmost record of Phaethon is 25° South. I was fortunate enough to observe Phaeton rubricaudus in 36° 44′ South on 23.2.55.

Not all sea-birds are vicious: One night, in the Pacific, a Cook's Petrel landed on deck. It was very friendly, and perched on hands and head without the slightest sign of fear, and seemed reluctant to leave us.

To the observant bird-watcher a whole new vista will be unfolded: In looking for birds he will note other details such as the breaking of the waves, the smaller marine creatures, or weed where he least expected it. Should he lift up his eyes he will see the glory of the sky colouration which will fill him with wonder and delight. But first let him obtain 'Alexander' and set about discovering the mysteries of identification.

NOTES FROM HOME

FARLINGTON MARSHES—A RECORD OF THE BIRDS 1956/1957

By Captain Peter Smith, Royal Marines.

(Note by Editor: "Farlington Marshes," which lie only a short way to the East of Portsmouth, was the subject of an article in Sea Swallow, 1956. Captain Smith now records birds seen in this area from November, 1956, to August 1957—"Pour encourager les autres" (sp. Fr.).)

11.11.56	Long-tailed Duck	Farlington
19.11.56	Merlin	Farlington
25.11.56	Velvet Scoter	Farlington
	Four Short-eared Owls	Farlington
29.11.56	Sixty-three Black-tailed Godwits	Eastney
18.12.56	Slavonian Grebes	Eastney
10. 1.57	Glaucous Gull	Eastney
23. 1.57	Slavonian Grebe	Eastney
24. 1.57	Little Gull	Eastney
14. 2.57	Brent Geese reached peak of 342	Eastney
22. 2.57	Great Northern Diver	Eastney
3. 3.57	Twite (3)	Farlington
25. 3.57	Southern Cormorant	Eastney
7. 4.57	Spotted Redshank	Farlington
9. 4.57	Sandwich Terns	Eastney
27. 4.57	Whimbrel	Farlington
May	Ringed Plover bred between Fraser and R.M. Gunnery School.	
19. 7.57	Whimbrel	Farlington
23. 7.57	Sand Martins going South ...	Farlington
3. 8.57	Little Stint	Farlington
4. 8.57	Shoveller (6)	Farlington
27. 8.57	Spotted Redshank	Farlington
	Wheatear	Farlington
	Whinchat	Farlington
	Red-backed Shrike	Farlington
1. 9.57	Wood Sandpiper	Farlington
	Marsh Harrier	Farlington
	Curlew Sandpiper	Farlington
	Grey Phalarope (3)	Farlington

BIRDWATCHING FROM A CAR

An interest in bird observation quickly brings an alertness of ear and eye to gain glimpses of bird life passing unseen to the less fortunate.

Commander M. D. Howell-Davies, R.N., gives one or two examples of a car being in itself a ready made hide, acceptable to many woodland birds.

"The truth was vividly brought home to us when motoring in Sussex. During lunch (with both side doors open) a Jay flew down within 12 feet of our car and gave us several minutes 'close up' as he rummaged in the woodland carpet. The same day we were able to draw up quietly alongside two Great Tits feeding their young. Some days later we drew up near a small wood which seemed worth exploring, but before we had opened the door, there, no further away than the car's bumper, were eight baby Long-tailed Tits, packed in a tight line facing head to tail alternately. In no time a parent bird had joined them on the branch."

AVOCETS FLY SOUTH—SUSSEX, SEPTEMBER, 1957

A.A. H K. BRIGHTWELL, stationed at the R.N. Air Station, Ford, writes:—"During the evening of Saturday, September 21st, I observed a flight of five Avocets over Barnham, Sussex. They were approximately at 150—200 feet altitude, in typical 'vee' formation and heading due South. Visibility was good and I was able to make quite a good observation of them. Realising that they are a somewhat rare migrant I checked with all the books of reference at my disposal, and came to the conclusion that these birds were indeed Avocets."

(Note by Editor:—Brightwell observes modestly "Perhaps some other member may be in a position to prove these could not possibly have been Avocets!" This report has been passed to the B.T.O. Regional Representative for Sussex.)

THE ISLES OF SCILLY — A RETROSPECT

By Lieutenant Commander E. S. W. Maclure, R.N.

My first visit to the Scilly Isles was made in May, 1926, as a naval cadet. Since then I have been back several times, and have had the good fortune to explore that wonderful seabird sanctuary, the Island of Annet (Little Ann), a small islet some two miles in circumference which lies to the westward of the large inhabited island of St. Agnes. Nowadays Annet is closed to visitors during the nesting season (15th April to 20th July) and can only be visited at other times by permission from the Tresco Estate Office.

The sun shone brightly on an afternoon of 20th June, 1931, when accompanied by a Midshipman we left our destroyer at anchor and shaped course for Annet in the ship's small skiff. The skiff was not fitted for sailing and we made rather a perilous passage under a jury rig through the two miles of uncertain currents and hazardous rocks. We were not a little relieved to find the bowman of the St. Mary's lifeboat in the offing in a motorboat who gave us a tow round to a sandy cove at the south of the island.

On first landing Great Black-backed and Lesser Black-backed Gulls rose up all around from the thick grass and pink Sea Thrift covering the island. Everywhere the ground was tunnelled with the nesting burrows of Manx Shearwaters and Puffins, but none were visible to greet us. In places the ground was littered with corpses of these unfortunate Shearwaters in their hundreds. Both the Manx Shearwater, and to a lesser degree the Puffin are defenceless on land and fall an easy prey to the Great Black-backed Gulls, which rip them open and leave the disembowelled carcasses to rot. For this reason no Shearwaters are visible during the day time and only approach and leave their nesting burrows under the comparative safety of darkness.

Later I trod through the roof of one burrow almost on top of a Manx Shearwater which scurried deeper into the safety of the earth after the fashion of a rat. A few of the burrows we examined contained the single white earth-stained egg, but there were few brooding birds at the time. The burrows contained very little in the shape of nesting material.

At the south end of the island where we first landed there were numerous nests of Great Black-backed Gulls ; in most cases the young were already hatched, the downy-clad youngsters scrambling over the rocks. When handled they had that unpleasant habit, common to many young gulls, of regurgitating their food. Among the boulders just above high water mark we came upon an Oyster Catcher's nest, the nest 'grass lined' in this case. How handsome their eggs are with their bold irregular brown and black spots on a background colouring of putty.

The northern end of Annet is rocky, and here Cormorants, Shags, Puffins, Razorbills and Guillemots all had nests. Many of these birds, especially the Auk family were riding in the sea a little way off shore.

In the Scillies there are many more Razorbills than Guillemots, no doubt due to the boulder strewn coastline of the islands which is more suited to the nesting requirements of the Razorbill, while the Guillemot prefers to colonise steep cliff ledges. A few of the Bridled species of Guillemot occur from time to time. At this northern end a few Ringed Plovers were seen and Oyster Catchers and Rock Pipits were in abundance ; all three species nest in the Scillies.

The Storm Petrel nests on Annet, as well as on other islands, laying its white egg deep in the crevices among the boulders. If disturbed, the Storm Petrel, like the Fulmar, will eject an unpleasant smelling oil discharge from its nostrils.

The Herring Gull, the Common Tern, and the Kittiwake all breed amongst the islands, and the Turnstone is a regular visitor, but disappears northwards to its own breeding haunts in the Spring. In winter the Great Northern Diver appears in small numbers. The Peregrine Falcon is another interesting resident, and its breeding sites have long been carefully guarded against harm.

Much bird migration passes through the isles, and in addition to many of the less common birds stragglers from America and Africa have been seen, as for example the Blue-cheeked Bee Eater seen on St. Agnes in June, 1951.

One cannot leave the Scillies without mention of the Atlantic Grey Seal, which makes its home in considerable numbers on the outer reefs and islets. They are often to be seen disporting themselves in the waters close off shore.

Times and the way of life have changed in the Scillies since the old days when smuggling French brandy and baccy and reaping a harvest from the salvage washed ashore from wrecks provided a precarious livelihood for the inhabitants. Since my early visits St. Marys now has a cinema, a regular air service, and a fine new motor vessel to link the islands with the mainland, and carry the bulbs and spring flowers to the English markets. But the seabirds still abide there and the lasting charm and spell of the islands remains. May and June are without doubt the best months of the year for a visit from the bird enthusiasts point of view to this attractive haunt of seafowl, rich flora and stronghold of the Atlantic Grey Seal.

(Note by Editor :—In a letter received this year from a Member, Lieutenant Commander T. M. Dorrien Smith, R.N. *(retd.), he suggests that other Members may wish to be aware of the present position regarding the uninhabited islands. Lieutenant Commander Dorrien Smith is the lessee of all these islands and an Hon. Member of the Nalvic Conservancy. A good many of the islands are, of course, closed during the breeding season, notices of which are published locally, but there are always enough islands left open for all varieties of birds to be seen. Special permits are granted in exceptional cases to visit the restricted islands.)*

NEW MEMBERS

AGATE, E. P.	Steward, R.N.
BAILEY, N.	Lieutenant, R.N.
BARLOW, A. J.	O.A.III, R.N.
BRANEGAN, J.	Electrical Sub-Lieutenant, R.N.
BRIGHTWELL, K. W. ...	A.A.II, R.N.
CADMAN, A. E.	Surgeon Commander (D), R.N.
CARTWRIGHT, R. W. ...	Leading Seaman, R.N.
CAYWOOD, D.	E.A. III, R.N.
CROUCHER, F. C. W. ...	Quartermaster, M.N.
DAVIS, M. H.	Naval Air Mechanic, R.N.
DORRIEN SMITH, T. M. ...	Lieutenant Commander, R.N.
FENTON, J. M. C. (D.S.C.) ...	Lieutenant Commander, R.N.
FOAT, M. J.	Ordinary Seaman, R.N.
GILBERT, H. L.	Commander, R.N.
GREAVES, F. W.	Chief Radio Officer, M.N. s.s. "Leicestershire."
HUGHES, A. M.	Commander, R.N.
JONES, A.	Senior Electrician, M.N. s.s. "Romney."
JOWERS, P. F.	Third Officer, M.N.
LAMBE, SIR CHARLES E. (G.C.B., G.C.V.O.) ...	Admiral.
MAYO, A. L. W.	Former Ty Lieutenant, R.N.V.R.
MELVIN, G. C. B.	Able Seaman, R.N.
MITCHELL, J. B.	Captain, M.N. (Master Mariner), m.v. "Beaverbank."
OPENSHAW, R. P. de R. ...	Captain, M.N. m.v. "Hollywood."
ORME, D. F.	Midshipman, M.N.
OSBORN, C. R.	Ex. P.O. Sailmaker, R.N.
SHEWELL, G. W.	Third Officer, M.N.
SMITH, J. S. S. (O.B.E.) ...	Captain R.N.
STEWART, N. S.	Lieutenant Commander, R.N.
TUCKER, R. L. (M.B.E.) ...	Chief Engineer, M.N. m.v. "Foylebank"
WATSON, A. G.	Commander, R.N.
WAITE, A. H.	Lieutenant Commander, R.N.V.R.

ROYAL NAVAL BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

Statement of Accounts for Year ended 30th November, 1956.

RECEIPTS				PAYMENTS			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Balance 1st December, 1955—				Postages	9	1	7
Cash at Bank and in hand	52	5	9	Printing—			
Subscriptions—				Sea Swallow 1955	38	14	6
Annual	63	17	0	Sea Swallow 1956	45	12	1
Life	5	0	0	Sea Passage Lists	12	3	9
	68	17	0	Bulletins etc.	9	7	6
Sale of "Sea Swallow"	12	11	0		105	17	10
Sale of Sea Passage Lists	11	2	0	Expenses Annual Meeting	3	16	0
Balance 1st December, 1956 — £22 1s. 10d.				Subscription to B.T.O.	2	0	0
				Bank Charges	1	1	0
				Stationery etc.		17	6
				Balance 30th November, 1956—			
				Cash at Bank	22	1	10
	£144	15	9		£144	15	9

I have examined the above account with books and records of the Society and certify that it is correct and in accordance therewith.

19 Fenchurch Street,
London, E.C.3.
12th December, 1956

(Sgd.) R. PEGLER,
Chartered Accountant.
(Hon. Auditor).

(Sgd.) G. SEYMOUR TUCK,
Chairman, R.N.B.W.S., 14.12.56.

R.N.B.W.S. REFERENCE BOOK LIST
(REVISED 1957)

AREA	*TITLE*	*AUTHOR*	*PUBLISHER*
WORLD'S OCEANS	**Birds of the Ocean.* *Supplied to Ships' Reference Libraries.	W. B. Alexander.	Putnam & Co., 42 Great Russell St., London, W.C.1. Rev. edition 21/-.
NORTH ATLANTIC.	*Sea Birds*	J. Fisher. R. M. Lockley.	25/-. Collins 14 St. James Place London, S.W.1 1954.
BRITISH ISLES	1. *The Popular Handbook of British Birds.*	P. A. D. Hollom.	45/-. H. F. & G. Witherby, Ltd., 5 Warwick Court, London, W.C.1 1952
	2. *Collins Pocket Guide to British Birds.*	R. S. R. Fitter. R. A. Richardson.	21/-. Collins. 1952.
	3. *Bird Recognition. Vols.* 1, 2 (3).	J. Fisher.	Pelican Series. 1947-1951.
IRELAND	*The Birds of Ireland.*	Kennedy. Ruttledge. Scroope.	42/-. W. & G. Foyle, Ltd., 119 Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2. 1954
BRITAIN AND ALL EUROPE	*A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe.*	R. Peterson. G. Mountfort. P. A. D. Hollom.	25/-. Collins. 1954
SOUTHERN SPAIN AND GIBRALTAR	*An introduction to the Birds of Southern Spain and Gibraltar.*	A. J. S. Tuke.	5/-. Garrison Library Printing Offices, 2 Library Gdns., Gibraltar. 1953.
PORTUGAL	*The Birds of Portugal.*	W. C. Tait.	16/6. H. F. & G. Witherby Ltd. 1924.
SOUTH AFRICA	*The Birds of South Africa.*	A. Roberts.	35/-. H. F. & G. Witherby Ltd. 1942.
	A First Guide to South African Birds.	E. L. Gill.	17/6. Maskew Miller Ltd., Capetown.
WEST AFRICA	1. *Handbook of the Birds of West Africa*	G. L. Bates.	30/-. John Bole & Sons & Daniels Ltd., London. 1930.
	2. *The Birds of West and Equatorial Africa* (2 *Vols.*)	D. A. Bannerman.	£6 6s. Oliver & Boyd. 1953.
CEYLON	1. *Manual of Ceylon Birds.*	W. E. Wait.	15/-.
	2. *Bird Life in Ceylon.*	Mrs. Cicely Lushington.	
INDIA	1. *Popular Handbook of Indian Birds.*	H. Whistler.	22/6. Gurney & Jackson, London. 1941.
	2. *The Book of Indian Birds.*	S. Ali.	Bombay Nat. Hist. Society. 1944.

AREA	*TITLE*	*AUTHOR*	*PUBLISHER*
HONG KONG	*Birds of Hong Kong.*	G. A. C. Herklots.	
MALAYA, SINGAPORE, PENANG	*The Birds of the Malay Peninsula, Singapore and Hong Kong.*	A. G. Glenistor.	35/-.
PACIFIC	*Birds of the Southwest Pacific.*	Ernst Mayr.	22/6. The Macmillon Coy., New York. 1945.
JAPAN	*Handlist of Japanese Birds.*	M. Hachisuto.	5/9. Ornith. Soc., Japan, c/o Zool: Inst. Science College, Japanese University, Tokio.
AUSTRALIA	*What Bird is that?* (A guide to the Birds of Australia).	N. W. Cayley.	12/6. Angus & Robertson Ltd., Sydney. 1931.
NEW ZEALAND	1. *New Zealand Birds.*	W. R. B. Oliver.	30/-. Fine Arts (N.Z.) Ltd., Wellington, N.Z. 1930.
	2. *New Zealand Birds and how to identify them.*	P. Honcrieff.	Whitecombe & Toombe Ltd., Auckland, N.Z. 1928.
U.S.A.	1. *Handbook of Birds of Eastern N. America.*	F. M. Chapman.	21/-. D. Appleton & Co., New York.
	2. *A Field Guide to Western Birds.*	R. Peterson.	14/6. Houghton Mifflin & Co., Boston, U.S.A. 1939.
	3. *A Field Guide to Birds.*	R. Peterson.	
	4. *The Audubon Water Birds.*	R. H. Pough.	Doubleday, U.S.A.
CANADA	*Birds of Canada.*	P. A. Taverner.	Nat. Museum of Canada, Ottowa. 1931.
WEST INDIES	*Birds of the West Indies.*	J. Bond.	22/-. Academy of Nat. Science, Philadelphia. 1936.
MALTA	*The Birds of Malta.*	E. L. Roberts.	12/6. Progress Press Coy., Ltd. 1954.
JAMAICA	*Introduction to the Birds of Jamaica.*	Lady Taylor.	3/-. Macmillon & Co., Ltd. 1955.

ABOUT OBTAINING BOOKS ON BIRDS

The B.T.O. run a book agency for bird books. Order through the Secretary, B.T.O., 2 King Edward Street, Oxford. W. and G. Foyle Ltd., 119 Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2 will usually obtain any book, new or secondhand. In both cases pay when you receive your order and include postage. H. K. Lewis and Co., Ltd., P.O. Box 66, 136 Gower Street, London, W.C.1, and Weldon and Wesley Ltd., Lytton Lodge, Codicote, Nr. Hitchin, Herts., are also booksellers of bird books.